

The One Thing

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In today's business environment, integrity is still the "One Thing." In fact, it's been the "One Thing" for a long time. Some think of it as old fashioned or not really relevant today. Our culture would have you believe that it doesn't really matter at all. But it does. Everything else you do depends on it.

Your employees know about your integrity only after being around you for a couple of weeks. It can be seen in big things and in small things. It's always there. It's always known. It's behind the wages you pay and the way you treat your employees. They know. It matters a great deal. Will you keep your promises? Do you tell the truth, even when it hurts? Do you deal with problem employees? Do you have favorites? Can you be trusted with confidential information? In fact, without integrity, employees won't stay for very long. In fact, they may have already quit, and just not left yet! Often, they won't tell you the real reason they left.

Your integrity is what your customers know about you over a period of time if you have an ongoing relationship. It is why they may or may not come back. They find out even more about what you stand for when things go wrong, or when they have to bring something back.

Your suppliers know about you as well. The way you treat them depends on your integrity. In fact, integrity is a major reason they do business with you or not especially over the long haul.

Today, you can have a business without integrity for a while, but only for a short while maybe until word gets around. Actually it has always been that way. Today's move around and somewhat impersonal culture simply allows some folks to fake integrity for a while by serving non-repeat customers.

"Integrity" is closely related to trust and loyalty. It is the principle value everyone must have when working with others. It is the essential ingredient for leadership and relationships with others. If integrity is not present, people figure it out almost immediately. If it's not present, nothing else said really matters, does it? What does it matter if I can cast a great vision, can create an awesome plan yet you can't trust me? What if you have a great product, but if I don't trust you to deliver it when you said, deliver it for the price you mentioned, does it matter?

If you tell me what you stand for, but I see actions that say otherwise, can I trust you? Do you pay your bills on time? Do you keep your promises? Do you err on the side of fairness when you deal with your employees?

How do I know about your integrity? I watch what you do...it's always what you do, not what you say.

"Example is not the main thing influencing others. It is the only thing." Albert Schweitzer

It is time to "Walk the Talk, not Stumble the Mumble." It takes time to develop integrity. Give it a try. One of the all time best examples was Abraham Lincoln.

You won't be sorry you did.

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